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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 000063

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PARM KNNP PREL IR NO

SUBJECT: IAEA/IRAN: FM PERSONALLY DRIVING NORWAY'S POLICY

REF: OSLO 56 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Stoere is directly and personally driving Norway's policy on whether the IAEA should report Iran to the UN Security Council. Stoere wants clarity on how the Security Council will deal with the issue before agreeing to send it there. Stoere is reaching out to his British, French, and German colleagues to sound them out. (Note. Post understands that Stoere's call to Straw has already taken place, but has no read-out of the content. End Note.) Stoere has told the press that Norway has not yet decided whether it will support reporting Iran to the UNSC. No approach to Norway below Stoere himself is likely to have much of an impact on Norway's position. End Summary.

¶2. (C) A visibly uncomfortable MFA DAS for Nonproliferation and Disarmament Jan Arve Knutsen admitted to us on January 18 that Stoere's direction on IAEA/Iran is at odds with the Ministry's previous indication that Norway was likely follow the EU-3 lead. "The Minister himself needs to be convinced that reporting Iran to Security Council is the right thing to do," Knutsen said, blushing when he added, "We've changed our talking points to be in line with the Minister's lead."

¶3. (C) Knutsen told us that after his meeting with el Baradei on January 17, Stoere is prepared to see the issue carry on until the next regularly scheduled IAEA meeting in March. Stoere also heard from el Baradei that Iran should be allowed a "pilot facility," and Stoere appears sympathetic to the idea that Iran should be given something. Knutsen admitted that he had no idea what a "pilot facility" was, but that el Baradei had told Stoere that a "pilot facility" had no proliferation risk.

¶4. (C) When pushed on how we should expect Norway to vote, whether it would stand with its major allies in the EU and US, Knutsen noted that Stoere has said that his mind is not yet made up, but that for the present Stoere thinks more time needs to be given to (undefined) "diplomatic efforts." Stoere's Chief of Staff independently confirmed to us that his minister needs convincing and reiterated that Stoere's major concern is how the Security Council would handle the issue if it were sent there.

¶5. (C) On January 17, Ambassador raised Iran in a previously scheduled meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Kjetil Skogrand. Skogrand told the Ambassador that, even though Norway is unsure that reporting the matter to the UNSC should be the next step, Norway "will not stand in the way" if a majority of the IAEA board support reporting Iran to the Security Council.

¶6. (C) Comment. Stoere's tack on IAEA/Iran is clearly less forward-leaning than that of Foreign Ministry as a whole, and Stoere personally has taken Norway deeper into the undecided column. Stoere is running this policy single-handed. Despite Deputy FM Skogrand's assurance that Norway would not stand in the way, it is conceivable that Stoere will continue to call for more time to be given to a diplomatic solution at the February Extraordinary IAEA Board meeting. If we want to make sure that Norway is with us, we need to go directly to Stoere and allay his concerns about how the UNSC would handle this issue.

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